

CSW62 Advocacy Report

CSW62 and GWI UN Reps

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CSW: Some Background

Members have received considerable information from GWI President, Geeta Desai on CSW62. This event is a major focal point on the GWI Advocacy calendar as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it was established by in 1946 to promote women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women. In 1996, the Commission's mandate was expanded to take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, the Commission now contributes to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women. For the Commission's annual two-week session, representatives of UN Member States, civil society organizations and UN entities come together in NY to discuss progress and gaps in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the key global policy document on gender equality, and the 23rd special session of the General Assembly held in 2000 (Beijing+5). Emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women are also discussed. Member States agree on further actions to accelerate progress of women's rights in political, economic and social fields. The outcomes and recommendations of each session are forwarded to ECOSOC for follow-up. UN Women supports all aspects of the Commission's work. The Entity also facilitates the participation of civil society representatives. This is why agreed conclusions are essential after each session but issues of language and custom/culture often can be stumbling blocks.

Our Engagement

GWI participates in the activities of NGOCSW/NY through its UN reps and by being involved in drafting the Zero Document which NGOCSW/NY develops to raise issues which are of concern to civil society and which is hoped will appear in any final CSW document. Certain input from GWI was taken up for the Zero document.

GWI also encourages its members to participate as GWI delegates. This year we had 14 delegates from nine countries. Added to this number was Louise McLeod from the Board and the four GWI UN Reps. Stacy Dry Lara was in NY for part of the first week to assist with co-ordination and Geeta Desai attended the social dinner as well as wrote up the information you have already received. Hazel Bowen assisted in co-ordinating activities – remotely from South Africa. 18 additional members, at CSW62 for other purposes, attending the two breakfast briefings and the social dinner held in the first week. A few delegates were not able to attend due to visa difficulties or family/work commitments. GWI also

provided a Written statement and was called on to present an Oral statement (which we had asked Maureen Byrne to read on our behalf).

GWI UN New York Reps

As mentioned, the New York UN Reps attended CSW62 and engaged with the GWI Delegates/members. They were part of the breakfast briefings which took place on two mornings and they presented the GWI Oral Statement when GWI was provided with that opportunity.

Sophie Turner Zaretsky provides a background to the work of the GWI UN Reps in New York. They participate on a number of committees such as the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York (NGOCSW/NY), UNESCO and UNICEF.

The NGOCSW/NY is an important coalition of hundreds of organizations and individuals working within the UN community to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Therefore it interacts with UN Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women, member states and other UN agencies. GWI UN Reps are intensely involved as this is a major network to ensure that GWI aims and mission are realized. They work on the Planning Committee, which in turn operates through a number of sub-committees, such as Consultation Day, Handbook preparation, Rally, Artisan Fair, Parallel events, Logistics and Review of the Zero Draft Document.

UNICEF is comprised of approximately 60 organizations advocating for the promotion and protection of children's rights. It has currently 5 Goals to its draft Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Of particular interest to GWI is the acknowledgement that access to and attendance in school alone is not enough – there is an emphasis on *schooling must lead to learning*.

UNESCO and UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR STATISTICS (UIS)

Maureen Byrne reports there are concerns relating to the number of indicators for SDG 4 (Access to Quality Education). (Although other agencies suggest more targets should be set). This aspect will need to be monitored. Also, the current statistics on the number of students not in school or who are in school and not learning/achieving is staggering. In addition, there is concern that member states are not adhering to their commitments about funding.

MAKING SENSE OF CSW62

Maureen Byrne provides some feedback on the meeting held at the Church Center; NYC; on March 23, 2018 where CSW62 was analysed - what was gained; what remains to be done. From the floor concern was expressed about lack of accountability by governments, the lack of knowledge of their rights by the women themselves, and the fact that education is not given sufficient attention.

LOGISTICS

As part of NGO CSW62 Forum Planning Committee, Maryella served as Co-Chair of the Logistics Committee, which was one of the nine planning subcommittees. This is a vital (and new) sub-committee as its purpose is to ensure all venues and events run smoothly. It works in conjunction with volunteers, interns and the NGO CSW office manager to staff each venue and all events that are part of NGO CSW62 Forum (parallel events).

Sophie reminds us of the vital importance of agreed conclusions being reached – and, of course, that we monitor that such agreements are implemented. Geeta has recently provided more information on

data disaggregation and the vital role that good, accurate and disaggregated data will play in ensuring sound implementation.